



# PROBUS RECORDER

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE PROBUS CLUB OF GILLINGHAM, DORSET  
([www.probus-gillingham-dorset.org.uk](http://www.probus-gillingham-dorset.org.uk))

Issue No. 207  
April 2022

## CHAIRMAN'S NOTES – Roger Ellis

You will all be horrified to know that if no member comes forward to offer their services as 'Lunch Organiser', then I would be happy to continue to undertake that role.

The lunch today at The Walnut Tree today (22<sup>nd</sup> March) went very well. At these events I particularly enjoy meeting everybody, including your wives or partners, in a nice, relaxed atmosphere. Let me say in complete honesty that I would prefer to eat with your wives or partners and leave you lot at home. I can assure you that the subjects for conversation would be far more interesting and revealing! I can recall on many an occasion saying to the assembled females "really, I didn't know that - do tell me more". Believe you me, talking about football, rugby, cricket and DIY can be tedious, but get an assortment of females together and you would be surprised, or maybe not, at the subjects that come up!

I would like to place on record my thanks to Gordon Banks for his efforts as Welfare Officer.

With Gordon's resignation the Committee needs a member to become our 'eyes and ears' in order to ensure we know when a member, or their spouse/partner, has a problem, whether health-related or otherwise. In carrying out his task, the Welfare Officer shouldn't be regarded as a busybody; his remit is to find out and follow up any case of a member in ill-health and thus ensure our Duty of Care towards our members. The Welfare Officer has to 'tread softly' and will normally only have to make a few telephone calls every couple of weeks to check upon members who have not attended meetings and from whom we have not received an apology. I ask that you think about it and let Colin or myself know if you feel you can help.

This is my penultimate effort as Chairman, and you will note that I haven't mentioned trains or sex! Oh but I have ..... see paragraph two.

*Keep well.*

## WELFARE and SOCIAL NEWS

The Chairman has already recorded our thanks to Gordon, and all that remains this month is to proffer his last update, which is that Ken Stedman has been passed fit for his surgery, but continues to await a date for the actual operation.

And as a final blast from Gordon's 'Golden Oldies' here are some names to think about.

Beryl O'Laughs- A lady always in cheerful spirits.

Eva Brick - A political protester from the 60s

Claire Water - A lady with a problem free life

Kaye Syrah - A carefree happy-go-lucky girl.

Dawn Bright - A eternally optimistic lady



## REPORTS ON OUR MARCH TALKS

### ‘Life in Georgian England - ‘The journal of a Georgian gentleman.’

*Mike Rendell – 8<sup>th</sup> March*

Mike Rendell lives in Sherborne. He comes from a family of hoarders, who never threw anything away. Almost unbelievably, he inherited tea chests full of papers, diaries, receipts and a journal belonging to one of his ancestors - **Richard Hall** (1729-1801). It was these papers that formed the basis of his talk.

Richard Hall lived in London, and, latterly, in the Cotswolds. These inherited documents provided an interesting and unusual insight into day-to-day life in Georgian England. A former lawyer, Mike Rendell is now a historian and author, specialising in life in the Georgian era. The task of writing up Richard Hall’s life and experiences was made easier by the fact that he had written a journal towards the end of his life.

After researching and sorting out the Hall papers, Mike Rendell wrote a book about the social history of those times through the eyes of his great-great-great-grandfather, Richard. This book was followed by another on paper cutting in the 18th century. Some of Richard’s clever paper cuts depicting various scenes have survived to this day along with the other records.

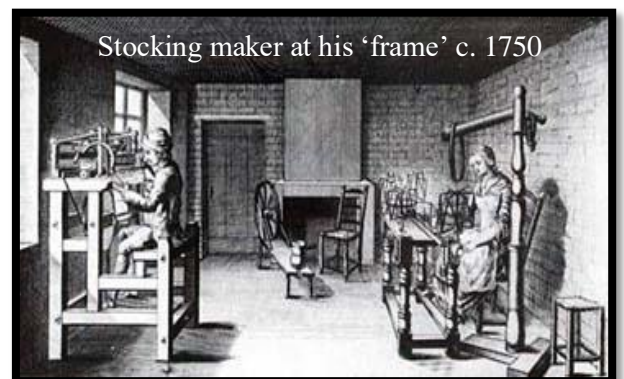


*South Sea Bubble Frenzy*

Richard’s father Francis was born into a wealthy Wiltshire landowning family. However, family fortunes took a crash in the collapse of the stock market known as the South Sea Bubble in 1720; the family had invested heavily, and the shares became worthless.

So, at the age of 25, young Francis had to look out for himself and seek paid employment. He was ineligible to be admitted for apprentice training by the London livery companies, being over the age of 21; as a result,

he headed south of the Thames, and obtained an apprenticeship in Southwark as a hosier, making silk stockings. He served the usual seven years of apprenticeship, and then married. Richard was born the following year. Francis was determined that the ultimate hope of restoring the family’s place in society and respectability depended on Richard, who would receive a good well-rounded education in a hardworking and Christian (Baptist) environment. This was evidenced through Richard’s surviving schoolbooks and records by Mike Rendell during his research.



*Stocking maker at his ‘frame’ c. 1750*

After leaving school, Richard was apprenticed to his father as a stocking hosier. By his later teenage years, Richard had started a booklet, jotting down what was happening in the world

around him, such as the victory of the Duke of Cumberland at the [Battle of Culloden](#) in 1746, and [earthquakes felt in London in 1750](#).

A major improvement in the family prospects came about when Richard succeeded in ‘*marrying well*’; at the age of 25 he married 21-year-old Eleanor Seward. Her father had made his fortune selling land for development north of the city of London; he had made enough money to retire to Bengeworth near Evesham to a country house (now the [Evesham Hotel](#)). Eleanor’s parents died soon after the wedding, so Richard (through his wife’s sudden inheritance) suddenly became wealthy.



Old London Bridge.  
‘No 1’ was at the left of the bridge on the far bank.

The redevelopment of the old London Bridge enabled Richard, now he had funds, to develop his business. The City of London Corporation leased a small area of land, just within the city limits to Richard, and he built a shop with a four-bedroomed house above; the address was one London Bridge. This prominent position attracted good footfall from travellers entering the city. The construction and fitting out costs were all carefully recorded by Richard. The achievement of respectability meant that he was

bound to pay fees (and a back payment) to the Haberdashers’ Guild to allow him to trade!

Richard continued to keep meticulous records; for example, noting the cost of insurances, and other overheads, problems with the basement privy; and a fire at the neighbouring warehouse and water wheel were all recorded. Also, daily notes about the state of the weather, and comments about the frequency (or infrequency!) of washing the laundry, which seemed to be about every three months; and having a bath once every two months! He made booklets recording illnesses and their remedies.

Richard’s 25-year-old son William was allowed a partnership in the business in 1780, ten days later, disaster struck, when his wife Eleanor died of a brain haemorrhage at the age of 46. Before the year was out, he had remarried, to Betty Snooke, a much younger woman. This was much to the horror of his three children; they boycotted the wedding and objected to Richard bringing his wife to live in the house at No 1 London Bridge. In the end Richard and Betty went to live in the Cotswolds. Richard retained a half share in the business, but never spoke to the children of his first family again. Betty presented him with a daughter, and later a son.

Richard wrote his journal before the end of his life, dying in 1801.

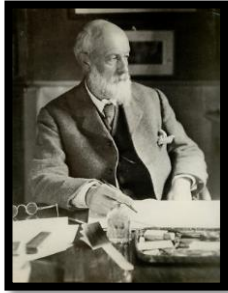
Mike Rendell’s research into his ancestor’s journal and papers has revealed a unique insight into life in Georgian England, through the eyes of one man.

Following questions, the Chairman gave the vote of thanks.

*Report: Alan Jeffs*

## ‘George Heywood Manoir Sumner – Artist and Archaeologist (1853-1840)’

*Adrian Green – 22 March*



Adrian Green, the Museum Director of Salisbury Museum, told us about Heywood Sumner. Sumner was influential in the **Arts and Crafts movement**, although not generally remembered these days like other influential figures, such as William Morris. Adrian Green’s talk revealed Sumner’s participation and experience in different fields – as artist, designer, archaeologist, historian, and publisher of traditional folk songs.

Heywood Sumner was born in Hampshire into a High Church Anglican family. His father was the Bishop of Guildford, and his mother was Mary Sumner, the founder of the Mother’s Union.

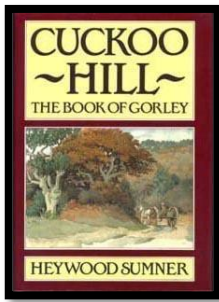
Somewhat surprisingly, Heywood Sumner did not enter the Church but, after Eton and Christchurch College, Oxford, qualified as a barrister at Lincoln’s Inn. He married Agnes, the sister of his childhood and college friend W.A.S Benson. Benson became a well-known designer of metal objects, and through him Sumner was introduced to William Morris and the Arts and crafts movement. In the 1890s he helped found the Fitzroy Picture Society, a group of artists dedicated to producing coloured prints for the enjoyment of the masses, rather than the more elitist Morris Arts & Crafts. He was also involved from the early days of the Artworkers Guild and the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society.

Sumner’s earliest publications ‘*The Itchen valley from Tichborne to Southampton*’ (1881) and ‘*The Avon valley from Naseby to Tewkesbury*’ (1882) were illustrated with his own etchings, and he went on to take commissions to illustrate other publications, including children’s books. Some of his commercial work was the design of wallpaper patterns.

Other notable work included incising coloured plaster on the walls of several Victorian churches, such as St Mary the Virgin, Llanfair Kilgeddin, and the design of stained-glass windows for churches, including All Saints, Ennismore Gardens, Kensington – now a Russian Orthodox cathedral. One of the last commercial works was for a tapestry, called ‘*The Chase*’ depicting a hunting scene in the New Forest, woven by William Morris & Co in 1908.



In 1897 due to his wife’s ill health, Sumner moved from London to Bournemouth. He purchased land at Cuckoo Hill near South Gorley and designed and built a family home.



Sumner's career had changed direction. He published the Book of Gorley 1910, illustrated with his line drawings, maps and watercolour paintings; this included anecdotes, illustrations of local characters, and the history of the New Forest.

Sumner's contributions to archaeology included drawing plans of sites in Cranborne Chase, and the New Forest, and the illustration of a guidebook for Stonehenge. He was interested in the remains of Roman pottery kilns and pottery discovered in the New Forest.

Heywood Sumner died in 1940, and is buried at Ibsley, near Ringwood in Hampshire.

Adrian Green explained there are displays about this man in the Salisbury Museum.

Following questions, the Chairman gave the vote of thanks.

*Report: Alan Jeffs*



## **ENDPIECE - Editor**

I hope that readers will not find the following newspaper report too risqué, but in view of our Chairman's remarks earlier in this edition, I felt it might help to put matters in perspective.

### **What men say when they're not in the mood.**

MEN are just as likely as women to make up excuses for not having sexual intercourse a survey suggests.

Six in 10 men have told their partner that they were too tired for intercourse, while 47 per cent said they were not in the mood.

One in five have complained of a head-ache, found the survey of 1,888 men. Other excuses included being put off by pet cats and dogs watching, being too busy because they were playing a computer game, and being too full after a large meal, found the poll by the Lloyds pharmacy Online Doctor service.

Nearly one in four men said they no longer had sexual intercourse, a figure that increased to 42 per cent for men aged over 55.

About 44 per cent of those aged 16 to 24 claimed to be having sexual inter- course two to four times a week, while 12 per cent claimed to be having sex every day.

Some 7 per cent of men said they no longer have erections and could be using excuses to hide the impact

of erectile dysfunction, which is estimated to affect about one in 10 men each year.

A quarter of men admit that they have been affected by the dysfunction at some point in their lives.

Almost a fifth of the men surveyed said they thought that being unable to get an erection immediately after starting sexual activity signified a problem. Half of the men said that anything between one and five minutes could be a sign of erectile dysfunction.

Although 47 per cent of men said they would seek advice from a medical professional and 24 per cent would talk to their partners, one in five men said they would not feel comfortable about talking to anyone concerning the condition.

Just 16 per cent of women realise that their partners have been affected by the dysfunction, according to the poll.

A quarter of people believed that the condition is most likely to affect men aged 56 to 65. Dr Tom Brett, from the online doctor service, said it can "affect any man at any stage in his life".